

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-14 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 DRC-01

/177 W

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R 051645Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5338

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

USINT CAIRO

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

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RABAT FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ME, UK

SUBJECT: FOREIGN SECRETARY DISCUSSES BRITAIN'S MIDDLE EAST POLICY

1. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY DISCUSSED HMG'S VIEWS ON THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS AND PEACEMAKING IN AN OFF-THE-RECORD QUESTION PERIOD FOLLOWING A TALK TO THE EUROPEAN-ATLANTIC GROUP ON NOVEMBER 1. SIR ALEC'S ON-THE-RECORD SPEECH WAS DEVOTED TO EAST-WEST RELATIONS GENERALLY, NOT THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT HE BEGAN HIS TALK BY REFERRING TO THE DISPUTE WITH THE ALLIANCE OVER THE CRISIS. THERE COULD, HE SAID, BE TWO OPINIONS IN NATO ABOUT HOW TO DEAL WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AND GET A PERMANENT PEACE.

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BUT THERE COULD BE NO TWO OPINIONS ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

ITSELF AND THE SECURITY OF THE WEST; WHEN THESE ARE IN JEOPARDY, WE ARE ALL UNITED.

2. ASKED ABOUT A BRITISH ROLE IN PEACEMAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SIR ALEC SAID HE "DID NOT CARE A DAMN WHO GETS THE CREDIT FOR BRINGING PEACE AS LONG AS IT IS ACHIEVED." THE KISSINGER/BREZHNEV UNDERSTANDING ON A CEASEFIRE WAS A BREAKTHROUGH. IT WAS NECESSARY AND DESIRABLE FOR THE US AND THE USSR TO STAND BY ISRAEL AND THE ARABS RESPECTIVELY TO MOVE THE PROCESS ALONG. IF THERE SHOULD BE A DEADLOCK, THE BRITISH AND FRENCH, AS PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, COULD HELP TO DISENTANGLE THINGS. SOME UK IDEAS ON PEACEMAKING HAD ALREADY BEEN ADOPTED BY OTHERS. WHEN THE FINAL PHASE OF ENSURING A PERMANENT PEACE IS REACHED, SIR ALEC SAID HE DOUBTED IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO BAR THE OTHER PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL. THE UK SHOULD TAKE PART IN A PERMANENT PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. AT THIS MOMENT, THE UK'S ROLE WAS TO OPERATE DIPLOMATICALLY BEHIND THE SCENES. LATER, WHEN THERE WAS A NEED FOR A COMPETENT PERMANENT FORCE, BRITISH WOULD BE NEEDED, AND THE BRITISH ARMY WAS WELL EQUIPPED TO CARRY OUT SUCH A ROLE.

3. ASKED WHERE THE PALESTINIANS FITTED IN, WHO WOULD STAND UP FOR THEM- SIR ALEC SAID THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION WAS AN ASPECT OF THE FINAL SETTLEMENT. THE FIRST REQUIREMENT WAS TO KEEP THE OPPOSING ARMIES APART, INSERT AN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCE AND DEVELOP

INTERNATIONAL BUFFER ZONES WHICH WOULD FACILITATE THE PROCESS OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE SAID THAT KING HUSSEIN'S PLAN SHOULD BE LOOKED AT CAREFULLY, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT IT COULD BE A SOLUTION.

4. THROUGHOUT THE QUESTION PERIOD SIR ALEC PLAYED DOWN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF US CRITICISM OF THE ALLIES DURING

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

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THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS. HE WAS CRITICAL OF THE PRESS FOR FEEDING THE CONTROVERSY. HE DEMOLISHED THE GUARDIAN'S CONTENTION (OCTOBER 31) THAT THE US AND UK HAD FALLEN OUT BECAUSE THE UK BLOCKED US EFFORTS ABOUT OCTOBER 13/14 TO GET A CEASEFIRE RESOLUTION IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL. HE SAID BRITISH HAD INFORMATION THAT ARABS WOULD NOT AGREE AT THAT TIME TO STOP FIGHTING, AND THE US HAD LATER TOLD THE BRITISH THEY HAD BEEN RIGHT. SIR ALEC ASCRIBED US/EUROPEAN DIFFERENCES TO DIFFERENT APPRAISALS OF WHAT WAS AT STAKE IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAR - THE THE EUROPEANS THIS WAS ESSENTIALLY A REPETITION OF THE PREVIOUS ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICTS; TO THE US, IT WAS AN UNMISTAKABLE CHALLENGE TO NATO. THESE WERE HONEST DIFFERENCES OF OPINIONS, HE IMPLIED.

5. COMMENT: WE ARE STRUCK BY HOW RESOLUTELY SIR ALEC

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MINIMIZED THE SHOCK TO THE ALLIANCE OF THE EVENTS OF

THE PAST WEEKS. HE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN BY POINTED QUESTIONS TO REBUT CRITICISMS WHICH US OFFICIALS HAVE LEVELED AT THE EUROPEANS. NOR WOULD HE OFFER TO EXPLAIN WHAT HE THOUGHT WERE THE GROUNDS OF US PIQUE WITH EUROPE EXCEPT TO OBSERVE THAT THE RECENT WAR HAD AROUSED DEEP EMOTIONS IN THE US ABOUT ISRAEL. IN BRIEF, SIR ALEC HEWED TO THE DELIBERATELY CALCULATED POLICY WHICH WHITEHALL MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS HAVE FOLLOWED OVER THE PAST WEEK OF MINIMIZING (IN PUBLIC) THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TENSIONS WHICH THE MIDDLE EAST WAR HAS CREATED IN THE ALLIANCE.

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